

THANKSGIVING 2002 *Message*

"Families have long provided strength and values to our Soldiers, our Army, and our Nation. We know we do not soldier alone."

THANKSGIVING is a time for the Army Family to pause and enjoy a day of rest, relaxation, and fellowship. As families and friends gather, Thanksgiving also provides an opportunity to show our gratitude for the blessings we enjoy in a free and prosperous Nation. Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, veterans, retirees, and all of their families can take pride in the fact that their service and sacrifices preserve the privilege of living and working in a free society characterized by the highest ideals of liberty.

Almost 140 years ago, Abraham Lincoln reminded Americans, "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown." Those words were spoken in 1863 during the Civil War. Our Nation emerged from that conflict stronger than ever before. And today, as The Army fights the war on terrorism as part of the joint team, those words still ring true as we enjoy the privileges and unparalleled freedoms that Soldiers have helped secure for over 227 years.

And so on this special day, we offer our appreciation to you, the Soldiers and civilians of The Army, who serve our Nation with a level of devotion and selfless service unequalled in any other profession. You walk point for our Nation 24 hours a day, uphold freedom's torch as you willingly step forward to defend the American people from all enemies and animate the values and principles that we hold dear—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

Thanksgiving is also a time for families to join in celebration and reunions. Families have long provided strength and values to our Soldiers, our Army, and our Nation. We know we do not soldier alone. For just as Soldiers sacrifice and dedicate themselves to honorable service, their families also sacrifice and make invaluable contributions to the Well-Being of our Army and our Nation. We give you our thanks, and a grateful nation thanks you as well.

We are proud of The Army Family. And so to all of you, the dedicated men and women of the U.S. Army—uniformed and civilian—we offer special thanks for the difficult and dangerous work you are doing for the citizens of our great Nation. We wish all of you and your loved ones a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.



Eric K. Shinseki
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff



Thomas E. White
Secretary of the Army

